MINUTES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE LONDON BOROUGHS OF BRENT, LEWISHAM AND SOUTHWARK
Tuesday 16 October 2018 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor McLennan (Chair – London Borough of Brent), Councillors Miller (London Borough of Brent), Bonavia (London Borough of Lewisham) and Cryan & Leeming (London Borough of Southwark).

Also Present: Councillor Paschoud (London Borough of Lewisham)

1.   **Appointment of Chair**

     RESOLVED that in accordance with Section 10 of the Joint Committee's Terms of Reference Councillor Margaret McLennan (as representative of the hosting authority – London Borough of Brent) be appointed as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

2.   **Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Alternate Members**

     An apology for absence was received from Councillor Amanda De Ryk (London Borough of Lewisham) with no substitute member attending.

     An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Stephanie Cryan (London Borough of Southwark).

3.   **Declarations of Interest**

     There were no declarations of interest from Members.

4.   **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

     RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Joint Committee of the London Boroughs of Brent, Lewisham and Southwark held on Wednesday 4 July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

5.   **Provision for Public Participation**

     No deputations or requests to speak were submitted by members of the public.

6.   **Update report to the Joint Borough IT Committee of the London Boroughs of Brent, Lewisham and Southwark**

     Prod Sarigianis (Head of Digital Services, Brent Council) introduced the report to the Joint Committee updating Members on key performance areas in relation to the ICT Shared Service.

As a starting point, a general update was provided which highlighted:

- a reduction in level of critical service disruptions sine the last meeting, although it had been recognised that further improvements in service stability were still required.
- The volume of open calls remaining high with a lower level of call resolution performance.
- Ongoing delay in the datacentre migration project for Southwark.

Members noted that as a result of the issues identified, work was now in progress to develop and implement an initial service improvement plan for the shared service which had been detailed in Appendix B of the report.

In terms of detailed performance updates, Members noted the summary of key performance indicators for the service across all three Councils up to October 2018, which had been circulated as Appendix A of the update report. The performance update had confirmed the increase in call volumes across all three Councils alongside a reduction in call resolution performance which had commenced during the telephony rollouts for Brent and Lewisham. There were a number of issues that it was felt had impacted on business-as-usual performance, which Members were advised the Service Improvement Plan had been designed to address. These included:

- the level of interim staff employed by the service and vacancies to be filled;
- management of staff and delivery of the business-as-usual service;
- the distinction between and management of business-as-usual and project work;

The following comments and issues were highlighted by Members in relation to the performance update provided:

(a) concerns were highlighted on performance in relation to Lewisham given not only the level of calls being logged but also the overall level of customer satisfaction, with further details sought on the reasons. Prod Sarigianis advised that the satisfaction scores provided were based on a standard set of performance measures and whilst recognising the reduced satisfaction levels for Lewisham highlighted these were now improving. He advised that details were available, if required, on the measurements used as the basis of the satisfaction score but noted that the key factor often related to stability of the service.

This was a factor supported by Councillor Bonavia who highlighted the impact which recent outages to systems operated by Lewisham had had on levels of satisfaction, especially as it was perceived these had taken longer to resolve than outages affecting either Brent or Southwark. By way of clarifying the position, Prod Sarigianis advised that the recent outages had created significant disruption for Brent and also Lewisham in relation specifically to their CRM system. The incident had been linked to the problems being experienced with the relevant datacentre links, which were now in the process of being addressed.

(b)   Councillor Paschoud highlighted additional concerns relating to the impact of recent outages affecting Lewisham in relation to the IDOX and LGS applications and sought details on whether these type of issues were included as part of any Risk Register maintained by the shared service. In response Prod Sarigianis advised that whilst a support contract was in place for these applications the issues experienced had related to the age of the system and server configuration which were matters the vendor had needed to address and confirmed that a Risk Register was maintained by the shared service.

(c)   Details were sought by members on the baseline being used to measure service performance, with a need identified to develop a robust benchmarking system. Whilst recognising the difficulties in comparing service provision against other sectors, given the complexities around funding and service provision, it was agreed that officers would look to identify appropriate benchmarking options for the shared service.

Prod Sarigianis then moved on to provide an update on service issues with members noting the increased stability in service provision compared to the previous monitoring period. Whilst issues were still being experienced there had been a significant reduction in the number of change–related incidents reflecting the embedding of the change management process across the shared service. Members were advised of the successful workarounds implemented in relation to the network configuration which had been designed to stop any further outages caused by issues with the Virgin link connecting the datacentres, in advance of a secondary BT link being completed. In terms of P1 incidents, these had peaked during August with a number of incidents related to legacy systems in Southwark. Four of these had related to issues with their externally hosted CRM system; three to legacy configuration/systems and one to the old telephony system. In addition three had been related to a major incident related to internet access, which had affected all three councils and had resulted in a number of changes to the major incident process being incorporated within the Service Improvement Plan.

Members were then provided with an update on progress with Phase 2 of the Southwark Transition (data centre migration), which Prod Sarigianis advised had been subject to further delay due to ongoing issues with upgrades of the links to the existing data centres provided by LGfL/Virgin. Given the delays experienced an end date of March 2019 was now anticipated.

Concerns were expressed by members at the significant delays experienced with the transition and whilst noting the alternative link now being sourced through BT as a means of improving resilience, the Joint Committee was keen to ensure that robust challenge continue to be provided to LGfL/Virgin in relation to the service currently being received. Whilst options to pursue these service issues through a contract performance mechanism were limited, members were advised that the concerns regarding the level and quality of service being provided had been escalated with LGfL/Virgin. In order to support this process, Members also agreed that a letter should be sent on behalf of the three boroughs represented on the Joint Committee highlighting the significant concerns raised regarding the level of service provided and impact this was having on delivery of the shared service.

Having noted the background to the involvement of LGfL in provision of the data centres, Members were also made aware of the significant concerns identified

within Southwark at the IT system security implications arising from the ongoing delays, which their Audit and Standards Committee had also requested an update on.

Members then moved on to consider progress on the shared service restructure, with Prod Sarigianis advising that all internal recruitment had now been completed leaving 22 vacancies currently being covered on an interim basis for which external recruitment had now commenced. In response to a query from the Chair, Prod Sarigianis advised that the aim was to have completed the recruitment process for the remaining posts by March 2019.

In terms of updates on other projects, Members noted (as detailed in the report):

• The start of the laptop rollout for Brent, with pilot's also taking place in Southwark and plans being development with Lewisham linked to the reconfiguration of their main offices. Members noted the offer being made available to staff sourced through the Lenovo contract with the opportunity also being taken to upgrade mobile phone provision, all of which it was recognised would involve a significant cultural change for staff in terms of ways of working;
• The start of the telephony project in Southwark, with the first phase focussed on implementation within their contact centres.

Prod Sarigianis concluded the update with a brief outline of progress on various procurement activity related to the shared service, with Members noting since the last update provided:

• The award of a single contract for the supply of Children's & Educational Services software for Brent and Lewisham; and
• Release of the tender for the three Council office and bulk printing, with contract award expected by the end of the year.

Having referred to the Shared ICT Service Improvement Plan, Prod Sarigianis was then invited to outline the scope and key themes of the Plan, as set out in Appendix B of the report. Members noted that the Plan had been developed on the basis of feedback from a number of sources and stakeholders with the following six areas for improvement identified:
• Governance & Culture;
• Strategy & Planning;
• Service Excellence;
• Resources;
• Communications; and
• Security.

In terms of delivery of the Plan a number of measures were being developed, which it was noted would include:
• the identification of additional management and technical resource;
• leverage of external and internal resources, including the development of 24/7 support;
• developing the capability and empowering existing managers;

- developing a more collaborative approach to prioritisation and delivery of project work;
- the involvement of the shared management team and board in monitoring delivery of the Plan; and
- the provision of ring fenced resource for service improvement workstreams.

Members noted the timetable outlined within Appendix B of the report for delivery of each element of the Improvement Plan. In terms of service excellence the focus would be upon the systematic adoption of IT Service management processes aligned with the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL), in order to provide a recognised best practice framework and service management standard for delivery of ICT services. In response to a query regarding the high level of activity planned during Q1 and Q2 2019, Prod Sarigianis advised that whilst challenging it was important to recognise the significant amount of activity already underway. The following additional queries were then raised on the technology activity identified under service excellence:

(a)   the reference to internet service replacement, which Prod Sarigianis confirmed related to completion of a proxy server replacement for Southwark; and

(b)   the data centre resilience testing, which Prod Sarigianis advised related to the testing of individual services and applications hosted within the centres once the upgraded network connectivity had been delivered to ensure they were functioning correctly following the upgrade.

In terms of the security element within the Improvement Plan, members noted the aim to ensure all three councils within the shared service were supported in terms of operating as Public Services Network (PSN) compliant and with Cyber-Essentials accreditation with a dedicated Security Manager and engineers being provided within the revised structure for the shared service.

As no further issues were raised the Chair thanked Prod Sarigianis for the update provided and it was **RESOLVED**:

(1)   To note the updates provided and actions being taken in relation to the ongoing performance and delivery of the shared service, as detailed within section 3 of the report;

(2)   arising from the update in **(1)** above:

(a)   a letter be sent on to LGfL/Virgin on behalf of the Joint Committee highlighting the significant concerns raised regarding the level of service provided in relation to the ongoing delays with the upgrade of connectivity links to the datacentres and impact this was having on delivery of the shared service; and

(b)   further consideration be given to the identification of appropriate benchmarking options which could be developed as a baseline for assisting to measure performance of the shared service;

(3)   To note the contents and updates provided in relation to the Performance Pack, circulated as Appendix 1 of the report.

(4)   To note the Service Improvement Plan developed in relation to performance of the shared service and timescales for delivery, as detailed within Appendix B of the report.

7.   **Shared ICT Service Arrangements**

The Joint Committee received a discussion paper, presented by Councillor Cryan (on behalf of London Borough of Southwark), which members were advised had been prepared to encourage further consideration around management options for ongoing delivery of the Shared ICT Service.

Whilst highlighting that Southwark remained committed to the Shared Service, a number of challenges had been highlighted in respect of the following areas:
- delivery of both ICT project and business as usual requirements, although it was recognised that some of these were related to legacy and investment issues;
- the perception that the service was being defined and delivered by Brent rather than as a shared endeavour;
- the current operating model's capacity (including structure, governance and processes) to operate at the scale now required to serve three local authorities.

Whilst members were agreed that the delivery of a strong and successful shared ICT service remained critical to all three of the boroughs, the Joint Committee was being asked to consider a number of questions regarding how best to manage the service moving forward in order to address the challenges identified.   These included:
- how best to create and maintain independence in terms of management of the shared service – including the proposal to appoint a Managing Director to lead the service independent of the three member authorities accountable to a Joint Management Committee;
- how best to address the current management capacity issues within the service;
- how best to address the wider service capacity issues across the service – including the potential appointment of technical architects by each authority;
- how best to start the improvement process – including (as outlined under the previous item) delivery of the Service Improvement Plan.

The paper was then opened up for discussion with the following comments raised:

(a)   members recognised the challenges identified as a basis for the paper, given the critical nature of the service in underpinning each Council's digital transformation strategy and driving service improvements for residents and in delivering performance improvement and associated efficiency savings. Whilst it was felt that the Service Improvement Plan represented the start of a process, in principle support was expressed towards further consideration and development of the proposals within the discussion paper.

In order to move the process forward members felt that further consideration would need to be given to the detailed arrangements in terms of timescales,

resources and operating structure prior to any final proposals being presented for approval.

(b)   In terms of the background to the proposed technical architect solution for each Council, members were advised that the proposal was aimed at addressing the current capacity to link and co-ordinate technology decisions between authorities and integrate with the enterprise architecture component of the shared service. Whilst recognising that some solutions would require a more localised approach, members were supportive of the proposed concept, subject to a more detailed definition of the role being developed, as a means of ensuring that technical requirements being identified to address business needs were subject to the necessary assessment and approval process.

(c)   Further details were sought on the membership of the Recovery Board being proposed to lead on delivery of the Improvement Plan, which it was confirmed would consist of the appropriate senior managers from the three authorities comprising the shared service. Whilst the final membership of the Board and its relationship with the existing governance arrangements for the shared service would need to be defined it was proposed that the Board would meet on a regular basis in order to oversee delivery of the Improvement Plan.

As no further issues were raised it was **RESOLVED** that given the general consensus expressed at the meeting regarding the proposals identified, further work be undertaken to develop the future management arrangements for the shared service with a further update on progress to be provided at the next Joint Committee.

Members agreed that should any proposals be identified as requiring more immediate consideration these would be raised with members outside of the meeting.

8.   **Exclusion of Press and Public (if required)**

No items were identified for consideration that required the exclusion of the press and public.

9.   **Any Other Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgency business identified for consideration at the meeting.

10.   **Date of Next Meeting**

RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Joint Borough IT Committee be confirmed for 6:30pm on Tuesday 5 March 2019 to be hosted by the Lonfon Borough of Southwark.

Members noted that if required, additional meeting(s) would be scheduled prior to that date in order to update on progress with the review of shared service management arrangements.

COUNCILLOR MARGARET MCLENNAN
Chair